

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Schuyler County Public Health

Our **mission** is to protect and empower our community to be safe, healthy and prepared.

Our **vision** is a connected community of healthy people and safe places.



A Message from the Director

As I reflect on 2024, I am proud of the progress our talented staff has made and mindful of the challenges we might face in 2025. Schuyler County Public Health has evolved over the past year in response to the shifting landscape of public health -- a landscape that will continue to shift in 2025 as we prepare for potential public health threats including avian flu, the opioid epidemic, and potential funding cuts. I am confident our incredible staff will adapt and face these challenges as a team.

Over the last year, we've focused on advancing our vision of a connected community of healthy people and safe places. As we have navigated the complex health issues facing our community we have made significant strides in several key areas.

Our department collaborated with community partners to be enhance our emergency preparedness. We responded to the impacts of the solar eclipse and took steps to prepare for the potential impacts of avian flu. We worked with The Arc of Chemung-Schuyler and the Watkins Glen Central School District to successfully utilize the [Active Communities Tool](#) and submit the results to the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH). This achievement was part of the performance incentive program and earned the department extra state aid dollars for our 2025 budget. Our department, as the fiscal agency for the Drug-Free Communities Grant, helped the Schuyler County Coalition on Underage Drinking and Drugs (SCCUDD) close out the final year of the grant. We also helped ensure the coalition had structures in place to sustain it into the future.

We took multiple steps to strengthen our administrative processes, increase staff competencies, and improve department efficiency and effectiveness. For many of our programs, we developed tools such as improved orientations, protocols, flowcharts, and Excel logs to help staff navigate the program, better utilize our electronic medical record system, and reduce redundancies in documentation. We also completed staff trainings to increase staff understanding and use of the shared file system, increase staff knowledge of health equity and belonging, and better utilize new tools such as the Travel and Purchase Request System.

None of these achievements would have been possible without the dedication, hard work, and commitment of our staff, our partners, and the community members who support and engage with our programs. I extend my deepest gratitude to everyone who has contributed to our success. Thank you for your ongoing support.

We look forward to another year of working together toward our shared vision of a healthier, more vibrant community. If you have any questions or if I can clarify anything in this report, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Jill L. Kasprzyk, Director



What is Public Health?

Public health is “the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life, and promoting health through the organized efforts and informed choices of society, organizations, public and private communities, and individuals.”

Collaborating with the community is essential in working to improve the health of Schuyler County residents. Whether we are working with an individual one-on-one after an animal bite or partnering with a community coalition, we are always **working hand in hand with the community to prevent, promote, and protect.**

Community Health Assessment (CHA) and Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

We collaborate with Schuyler Hospital and various community partners to conduct a Community Health Assessment every several years with the goal of identifying the major health concerns facing our county. Using the information from the assessment, we create a multi-year Community Health Improvement Plan to guide efforts to address these health concerns.

For 2022-2024, the health priorities of the CHIP included work in:

- Preventing chronic diseases by increasing cancer screening rates
- Promoting mental health by reducing the prevalence of major depressive disorders and preventing suicides
- Preventing opioid and other substance misuse and deaths



Photo: Staff made a visit to the Community Cupboard to learn about this new service provided by Schuyler Hospital

2024 Accomplishments

The next CHA and CHIP are due to the state in December 2025. In 2024, we began work on the CHA. As part of preparing for the CHA development, we conducted a survey to assess community members’ access to care and any barriers they face to getting that care. We also completed a year-end report for the State Department of Health on the progress completed from 2022-2024 on the current CHIP.

Strategic Plan for 2024-2026

Our department's strategic plan includes two priorities, to *build and maintain trust in Schuyler County Public Health as a collaborative partner in community health improvement* and to *recruit and retain a high-quality, high-performing workforce*. In 2024, we made progress on many actions outlined in our plan such as creating a new employee suggestion box, creating updated orientation materials for the agency and for programs, developing a new brochure, and creating a new LinkedIn page. The department has also been looking into finding new space to improve accessibility and house the whole department together in one building.

Staff Accomplishments



Photo: Admin Assistant Corie and Director Jill reached 25 and 20 years with the county!

- Staff employment milestones:
 - Corie Stansfield - 25 years
 - Kayla Smith - 1 year
 - Jill Kasprzyk - 20 years
 - Lorelei Wagner - 1 year
 - Deborah Dalmat - 10 years
- Ella James and Ruinan (Nina) Sun completed their two-year Public Health Corps Fellowships with our department.
- Jill completed the Fundamentals of Financial Management course hosted by NACCHO.
- Mandy attended the Rural Health Symposium.

Other Departmental Accomplishments

- Tabled at various community events including the Harvest Festival / Cayuga Health's Teddy Bear Clinic, Village Christmas, and the Waterfront Festival.
- Staff were trained on de-escalation techniques through either a virtual presentation or the Crisis Communications training offered through the County.
- Visited Schuyler Hospital's new Community Cupboard to strengthen partnerships and improve our ability to refer community members to resources.
- Completed the final step to relinquish our Licensed Home Care Services Agency (LHCSA) license. Relinquishing this license allows the department to complete all our needed programming without extra regulatory burdens that were not intended for local health departments.
- Developed and implemented a New Communication Directory system, Travel and Purchase Request system, and Inventory system.
- Created a new Public Health Revenue Tracking Sheet.
- Started the Belonging Book Club.
- Received an outreach van that can be used for community events.



Chronic Disease Prevention Program

Chronic diseases - such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes - are the leading causes of death and disability in the United States. Healthy lifestyle choices can help lower the risk of developing many of these chronic diseases. Our chronic disease prevention program works to reduce the impact of chronic disease in the community and increase the lifespan of community members. We provide education on ways to improve health and reduce long term diseases alongside community partners.



Photo: Public Health Nurse Kayla with tick removal kits that are available for community members.

2024 Accomplishments

We worked with the Arc of Chemung-Schuylers and the Watkins Glen Central School District to successfully utilize the [Active Communities Tool](#) and submit the results to the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH). This achievement was part of the performance incentive program and earned the department extra state aid dollars for our 2025 budget.

Communicable Disease Prevention Program

Communicable diseases are illnesses or infections that can be spread from person to person, animal to person, or person to animal. The overall goal of this program is to protect the community by limiting the spread of infections. We focus on the prevention of disease through surveillance, case management, screening, and education. Our staff follow up on communicable disease reports to ensure the patient and their contacts receive appropriate treatment to stop further spread. We also provide community members and organizations with tick removal kits, safer sex kits, and other prevention information and tools.

2024 Accomplishments

- Distributed over 700 tick removal kits, expanding access through various community locations including each of the county buildings. Kits are also available in the main town or village building for each municipality.
- Completed 117 communicable disease investigations.
- Conducted over 100 educational outreaches to the community and providers.
- Two staff attended a conference hosted by the CDC and FBI on strengthening relationships between Public Health and Law Enforcement to facilitate responding to any intentional spreading of communicable diseases.
- Assembled safer sex kits and placed them in the community at local healthcare provider offices, county departments, and local establishments.

Immunization Program

Our Immunization Program provides outreach and education to community members and health care providers, including information on vaccines and where to get them. We also provide vaccines to community members who are uninsured or underinsured.

2024 Accomplishments

- Campaigns featuring staff and community members were shared on social media to promote COVID and flu vaccination.
- Met with Mennonite families to learn how to better partner with them and provide outreach to meet their immunization needs.



Photo: Public Health Specialist Alyssa tabling at the Watkins Glen Central School District Open House

Rabies Prevention Program

Rabies is a deadly disease that any mammal, including people, can get through contact with the saliva of an infected animal, usually through a bite. Vaccinating pets, like dogs, cats, and ferrets, is one of the best ways to prevent people from getting rabies. It is also required by law in New York State.

Our department helps prevent the spread of rabies by providing no-cost public [Rabies Clinics](#) each year and by investigating all animal bites and wild animal exposures in the county. Our investigations allow us to ensure exposed people and animals are protected from rabies.

2024 Accomplishments

- Provided rabies vaccination for 535 animals, a 20% increase in clinic vaccinations from 2023. This was the first year with similar numbers of vaccinations to those seen prior to 2020.
- Completed 155 total rabies case investigations.
- 15 animals were tested for rabies, 5 of which tested positive (one cat, two skunks, and two deer).
 - One of the rabid animals was a cat linked with the Humane Society. Eight individuals were authorized to receive post-exposure treatment due to exposure to this cat. Six other cats were placed on a 6-month quarantine at the Humane Society to prevent the potential spread of rabies.
- Authorized Post-Exposure Prophylaxis for 26 individuals, of which 23 completed the treatment.

Emergency Preparedness Program

Our emergency preparedness program helps the community prepare for, respond to, and recover from public health emergencies. We work with first responders, businesses, community members, and our MRC Volunteers.

Our MRC is made up of both medical and non-medical community members who have a passion for community service. They can help out in a variety of ways, such as:

- Helping with rabies clinics
- Taking part in emergency drills
- And more!



Photo: Public Health Nurse Kayla training staff for annual PPE / Infection Control training

2024 Accomplishments

- Staff and MRC volunteers set up a mock clinic to test the response to an imagined Hepatitis A incident. We partnered with The Arc of Chemung-Schuyler to test our ability to provide universal access, considering those with access and functional needs.
- We began updates to the Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan, the Continuity of Operations Plan, the Medical Countermeasure Plan, and the Pandemic Plan.
- Public Health staff participated in the COOP training offered through the County in October to help facilitate the update of our Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP).
- We completed an internal tabletop exercise to drill our response for if measles were to occur in the county.
- 28 MRC activities were held this year including rabies clinics, phone coverage, rabies certificate data entry, and more.
- MRC members volunteered 223 hours of their time this year, bringing the economic value of MRC volunteers' contribution to \$7,877 total for the year.
- Emergency Preparedness Coordinator attended the MRC National Summit in Chicago in May.
- A volunteer helped the Emergency Management Office make phone calls to check on our vulnerable community members during the summer heatwave.
- Updated our MRC volunteer onboarding and offboarding processes.
- Completed the needed projects to receive MRC STTRONG award.

Family Health

Our Maternal and Child Health program provides new and expecting parents with health guidance and referrals to make sure they receive the proper care and services they need before the baby is born and after they arrive. Our goal is to make sure families are doing well throughout the first few weeks and months at home. We provide educational home or virtual visits on a variety of parent and baby care topics. These are available to ALL new and expecting parents in the county at no charge.

Our reproductive health program focuses on addressing the needs of Schuyler County residents of reproductive age. Our work aims to prevent unintended pregnancies and to promote optimal birth spacing and outcomes for families. We also work with community partners to provide education and identify needs in the community.

2024 Accomplishments

- 26 direct referrals for expecting or new parents were made to the program.



Photo: Public Health Specialist Amanda at the Hector A Fair

Injury Prevention Program

Injuries and violence – such as motor vehicle crashes, suicide, drowning, and falls – are the leading cause of death for Americans under age 45, but injuries impact people of all ages. Our injury prevention program aims to reduce injuries in Schuyler County by providing education and outreach.

2024 Accomplishments

- More than 20 educational outreaches to the community and providers.
- We became an Opioid Overdose Prevention Program.
- Two staff became trained Mental Health First Aid trainers.



Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN) Program

Our Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN) program covers children from birth through age 21 who have conditions that may cause them to need extra support services or specialized health care.

Schuyler County Public Health provides families in the community with information and referrals to the services or care their child needs.

2024 Accomplishments

- Worked on connecting families with services and family groups in the community.
- Participated in the Early Childhood Coalition.
- 69 children received services through the Preschool Special Education Program in the 2023-2024 school year.
- Preschool process updated to improve communication with schools and increase internal efficiency.



Photo: Public Health Specialist Mandy and Fellow Yen at Village Christmas

Early Intervention (EI) Program

While all children develop and grow differently, some children may need a little extra help with walking, talking, playing, and growing. The Early Intervention (EI) Program helps connect children ages 0 to 3 with services they need to help them reach their full potential. Children who qualify for the program may receive speech therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, or special instruction. Families in the program also receive care coordination for their child and guidance and resources to support their child's growth.

2024 Accomplishments

- 34 children were referred to the EI program in 2024.
- The EI-Hub, a new State system for the program, was rolled out in October and there were many difficulties statewide during the roll out. We completed work internally and with the Service Coordinator from The Arc of Chemung-Schuyler to ensure the appropriate children were all in the new system and able to receive services.
- Our department continues efforts to get qualified children the services they need. However, there continues to be too few providers to adequately serve the children who qualify for the EI program.

Lead Poisoning Prevention Program

Lead poisoning occurs when lead particles are swallowed or breathed in. Exposure to even a small amount of lead can be harmful to children.

Our lead poisoning prevention program monitors elevated blood lead levels of children in the county. When a child has an elevated lead level, we work with the family and the NYSDOH Hornell District Office to identify the lead exposure risks and create a plan to lower lead levels. We also provide education to community members on how to prevent lead poisoning and on common ways people may be exposed to lead, such as by lead paint or soil around their home.



Photo: Public Health Specialist Alyssa and Public Health Nurse Kayla at Cayuga Health's Teddy Bear Clinic during the Harvest Festival

2024 Accomplishments

- Completed case management for children with high blood lead levels.
- Strengthened our relationship with the New York State Department of Health's Hornell District Office to improve lead mitigation coordination.
- Partnered with Cornell University to host a Lead Renovator Training in April.

Watershed Protection Agency

Our Watershed Protection Agency provides water quality monitoring services and property transfer inspections for Schuyler County residents. They lead the Lamoka-Waneta Lakes Wastewater Treatment Inspection Program and the Cayuta Lake Protection and Rehabilitation District Inspection Program. They also respond to complaints about public health nuisances that could impact the county water supply.

2024 Accomplishments

- Completed 961 water samples
- Provided 60 new well construction permits
- Completed 61 property transfers
- Replaced 23 septic tanks
- Upgraded 5 septic tanks
- Provided 47 new septic construction permits
- Inspected 161 septic systems in the Cayuta and Waneta/Lamoka Lake Districts
- \$32,500 reimbursed to residents through the EFC Grant.
- Worked with the County Attorney's Office to update billing procedures.



Performance Management Quality Improvement (PMQI)

The PMQI Committee works to improve the performance and quality of the services Schuyler County Public Health provides to the community. The committee gathers and analyzes performance data, including community feedback from surveys. The Committee also sets goals for programs, selects quality improvement projects, and reviews program audits to ensure Schuyler County Public Health is providing effective and efficient programs and services to the community.



Photo: Public Health Specialist Mary and Public Fellow Ella tabling at the Waterfront Festival

2024 Accomplishments

Performance Management:

The performance management system was fully rebuilt using [Clear Impact](#).

Quality Improvement:

There were six quality improvement projects completed during 2024. They were related to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of our:

- Shared files system organization and usage.
- Emergency communications with staff and volunteers.
- Communications Directory.
- Safety procedures for staff.
- Phone call process and customer service.
- Case Files and Medical Records management.

Accreditation

Public Health Accreditation is awarded by the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) to health departments that meet nationally recognized standards. Schuyler County Public Health became an accredited health department in 2020. The department is currently getting ready to apply for reaccreditation. We plan to submit our documentation on January 31, 2026. In 2024, we identified documentation for over 90% of the needed documents and started compiling some of the examples.



Community Coalitions

Our department works with community coalitions, including SCCUDD and SAFE, to help combat some of the biggest health problems facing the county.

Suicide Awareness for Everyone (SAFE)



Suicide Awareness For Everyone (SAFE) is a dedicated group of community members and organizations that are devoted to connecting people to prevention, intervention and recovery by providing education, support, and advocacy to reduce the suicide rate in Schuyler County.

2024 Accomplishments

- Collaborated with local health departments and community partners on a regional [#BeThe1To](#) suicide prevention campaign.
- Tabled at the Waterfront Festival and raised \$785 for suicide prevention efforts in the community.
- Coalition members cleaned the HOPE garden at the Mill Creek Center.
- Public Health Specialist, Amanda, served as the SAFE secretary.
- Created a new strategic plan for SAFE. The goals include:
 - Increasing outreach and community presence
 - Enhancing member engagement and participation
 - Expanding training and educational opportunities
 - Strengthening communication and information dissemination
- The SAFE Coalition also tabled at the Harvest Festival.



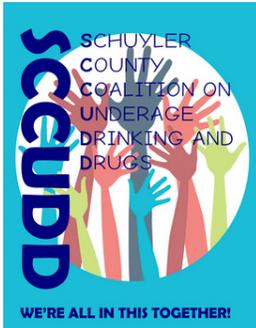
Photo: Public Health Specialist Amanda and SAFE member Judy tabling at the Harvest Festival



Bottom three photos: local first responders were highlighted in the #BeThe1To campaign



Schuyler County Coalition on Underage Drinking and Drugs (SCCUDD)



SCCUDD – the Schuyler County Coalition on Underage Drinking and Drugs – is a group of dedicated community members, businesses, and agencies that work to prevent, reduce, and delay the onset of substance use among Schuyler County youth. SCCUDD’s vision is a connected community where our youth have education, resources, and drug-free options to help become happy, healthy adults.

2024 Accomplishments

- Partnered with the Sheriff’s Office on:
 - A new Tip Line promotion campaign
 - A new safe-server (FAIR) training promotion campaign
 - Voluntary Compliance checks for alcohol retailers
 - Drug Take Back Day
- Completed the last year of the 10-year Drug-Free Communities Grant.
- Partnered with the local school districts to distribute educational materials to prom attendees.
- Partnered with the District Attorney’s Office to update materials that inform community members about the local Social Host Law.
- Held a community event on the state of drug use in Schuyler County. Guest speakers included Chief ADA Jeremy Hourihan, Youth Bureau Program Coordinator Catherine Collins, and Public Health Specialist Alyssa Morse.
- Partnered with the three county school districts to survey students in Grades 7 through 12 on their perceptions and experiences related to alcohol and other drug use. Youth substance use rates are mostly continuing their downward trend.
- Created the Schuyler County Youth Substance Use Report Card for 2013-2024
- Partnered with local businesses on a Sticker Shock campaign that featured a design created by a local teen.
- Created SCCUDD’s History and Accomplishments fact sheet
- Presented at Watkins Glen Central School District and provided other education campaigns about youth drug use and its prevention.



Photo:
The Sticker Shock sticker on a pizza box at a local restaurant

Photo: Updated Tip Line promotion

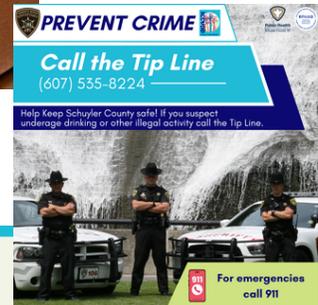
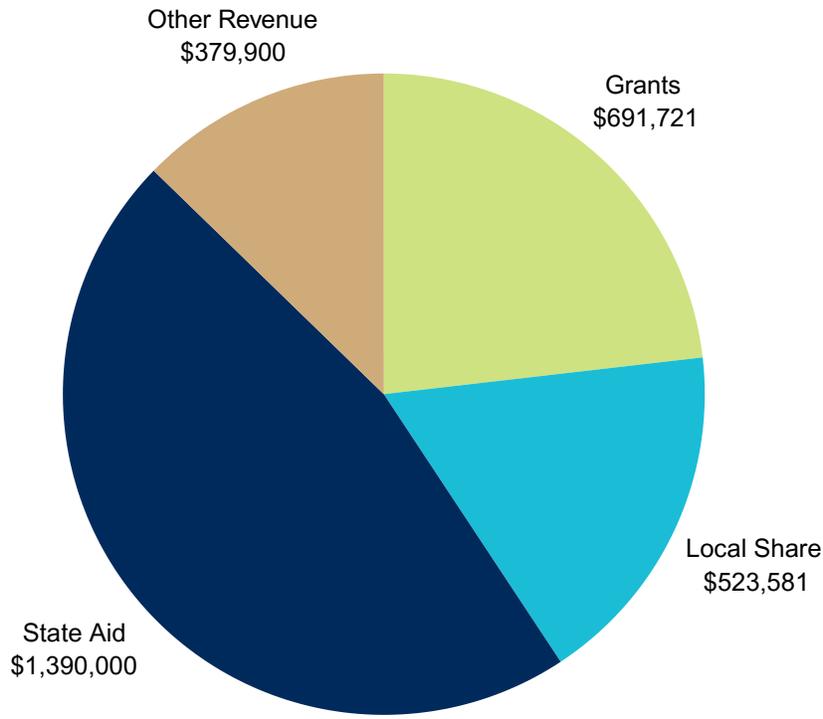


Photo: Updated Social Host Law materials

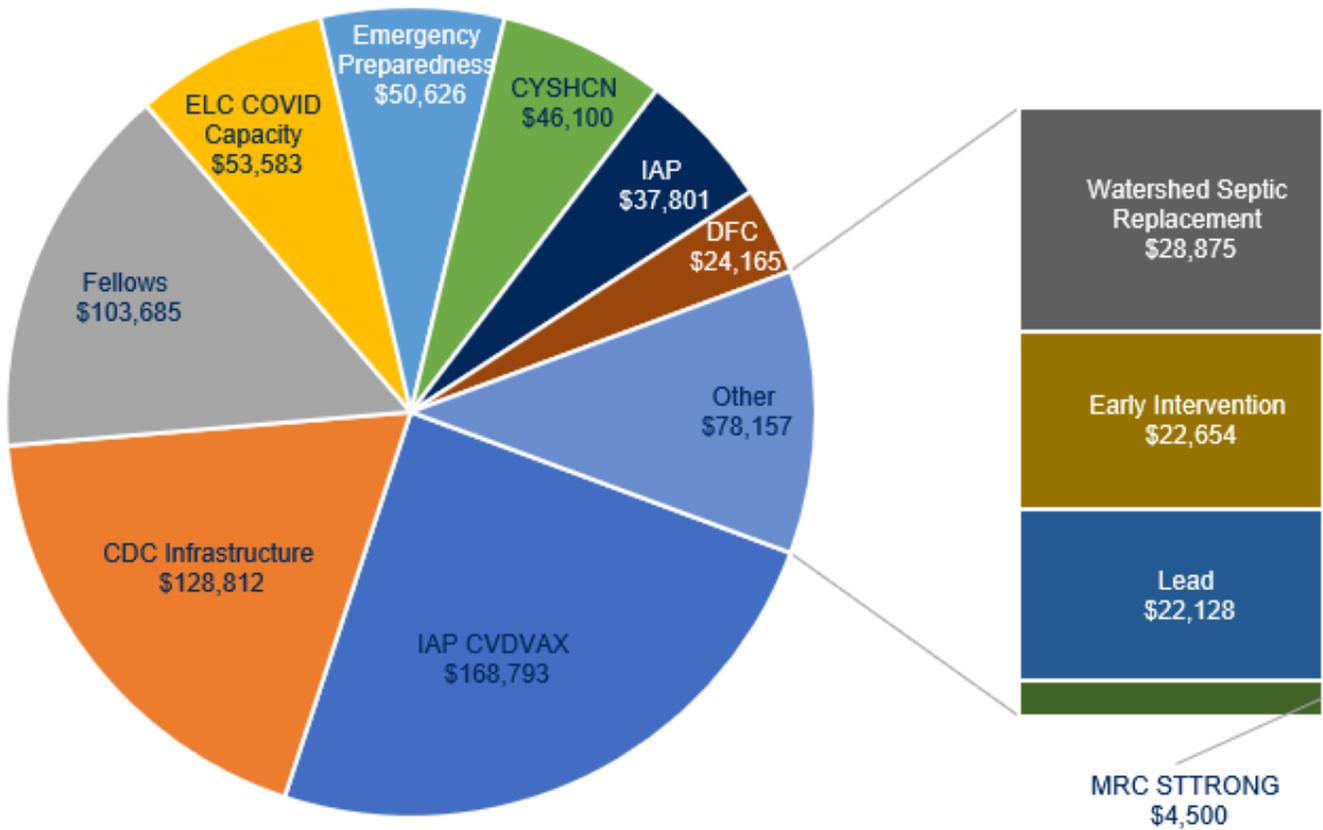


Budget

Revenue



Grants



Environmental Health Services

Schuyler County Public Health is a partial service county, meaning that much of the environmental health efforts in Schuyler County are completed by the New York State Department of Health's District Office in Hornell. The Hornell District Office protects the health of the public through a variety of programs, including those that ensure that food and indoor air quality are safe in locations like restaurants and hotels.



KATHY HOCHUL
Governor

JAMES V. McDONALD, MD, MPH
Commissioner

JOHANNE E. MORNE, MS
Executive Deputy Commissioner

The Hornell District Office is responsible for protecting public health and safety through the delivery of core environmental health programs and services and through the enforcement of environmental health regulations in Schuyler and Steuben Counties. Duties & responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Issuing permits to the following types of regulated facilities:
 - Food Service Establishments
 - Temporary/Mobile Food Service Establishments
 - Children's Camps
 - Temporary Residences (Hotels, Motels, etc.)
 - Campgrounds
 - Mobile Home Parks
 - Mass Gatherings
 - Agricultural Fairgrounds
 - Public Swimming Pool and Bathing Beaches
 - Recreational Aquatic Spraygrounds
 - Tanning Facilities
- Conducting plan reviews and approvals for:
 - All Regulated Facilities
 - Public Water Systems
 - Realty Subdivisions
 - Alternative Residential Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems
- Conducting inspections/sanitary surveys/complaint investigations at:
 - All Regulated Facilities
 - Public Water Systems at NYS Agriculture & Markets Licensed Facilities
 - Public Water Systems at Licensed Day Care Facilities
- Conducting investigations of:
 - Drownings at Regulated Facilities
 - Food & Waterborne Illness Outbreaks
 - Injuries and Illness Outbreaks at Children's Camps
 - Environmental Conditions linked to Children with Elevated Blood Lead Levels
- Overseeing tobacco prevention programs
 - ATUPA (Adolescent Tobacco Use Prevention Act)
 - CIAA (Clean indoor Air Act)
 - Providing emergency response at incidents presenting biological, chemical or radiological exposures/hazards and at natural disasters
 - Distributing and enforcing the Commissioner of Health's Summary Orders (i.e. bath salts, synthetic cannabinoids, etc.)

Hornell District Office Report Continued

New York State Department of Health Hornell District Office Contribution to the Schuyler County Public Health Department 2024 Annual Report

In 1921, legislation was enacted that empowered New York State counties to create county health districts. The purpose of a county health district was to consolidate local authority for the oversight of public health work at the county level rather than having public health activities dispersed to the constituent county cities, towns and villages. Counties were not required to create such health districts and as time passed, it became evident that many rural counties (including Schuyler) that had not formed a county health district would face increasing logistical and financial challenges that coincided with expanding public health needs and requirements. County health departments that operate in counties without county health districts are known as “partial services” county health departments.

As a matter of policy, not law; the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) addressed the need to maintain a baseline of environmental health programs/activities in partial services counties by creating District Offices. Nine district offices currently operate in New York State, and in Schuyler County, it is the NYSDOH Hornell District Office (HDO) that provides core environmental health programs and services to County residents and visitors. In partnership with Schuyler County Public Health Department and other state and local agencies, the HDO enforces environmental health regulations and oversees a variety of programs that are designed to protect public health and safety. The attached document provides a summary of HDO’s duties and responsibilities and the services provided in Schuyler County and in Steuben County - the other county that is located within the HDO’s jurisdiction.

Highlights of the HDO’s activities in Schuyler County during the 2024 calendar year included the following:

- Conducted 263 inspections at the county’s regulated facilities. Of those inspections approximately 151 permanent food service operations and 70 inspections at temporary food service operations.
- Conducted 6 sanitary surveys (enhanced inspections) at community water systems (primarily municipalities and mobile home parks) and 51 sanitary surveys at other regulated facilities with onsite water supplies.
- Conducted 26 student aide compliance visits to tobacco retailers to ensure compliance with the Adolescent Tobacco Use Prevention Act (ATUPA).
- Investigated 11 complaints alleging sanitary code violations at regulated facilities.
- Worked with Schuyler County Public Health to conduct lead-based paint risk assessments of private Schuyler County residences in response to referrals of children with elevated blood lead levels. There were 7 assessments in 2024.
- Two inspections were conducted at the County’s two tanning operations (each tanning facility must be inspected within a two-year period).
- Initiated 16 formal enforcement action (Administrative Tribunal Hearings) to address NYS Sanitary Code violations at regulated facilities.

From January 1, 2013 through December 31, 2024, six of the owners of tobacco retail outlets in Schuyler County illegally sold tobacco products to individuals under the age of eighteen/ twenty one during the HDO’s compliance checks (2020-3 sales, 2022-1 sale, 2023- 2 sales, 2024- 0 sales).

From January 1, 2013 through December 31, 2024, HDO initiated formal enforcement actions (Administrative Tribunal Hearings) against public water suppliers for failure to submit monthly water operation reports within the required timeframe (2013 – 0; 2014 – 2; 2015 – 0; 2016 – 1; 2017- 1, 2018-4, 2019-4, 2020-3, 2021-0, 2022-1, 2023-0, 2024-0).

No trends or patterns were identified during the reporting period in any aspect of the District’s delivery of its core environmental health programs and services, including compliance and enforcement.

Prepared by



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District Director
Hornell District Office
March 13, 2025